PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS IN JUNE 2001

ABRAHAM LINCOLN MONUMENT

(COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "STANDING LINCOLN")

LINCOLN PARK AT DEARBORN PARKWAY

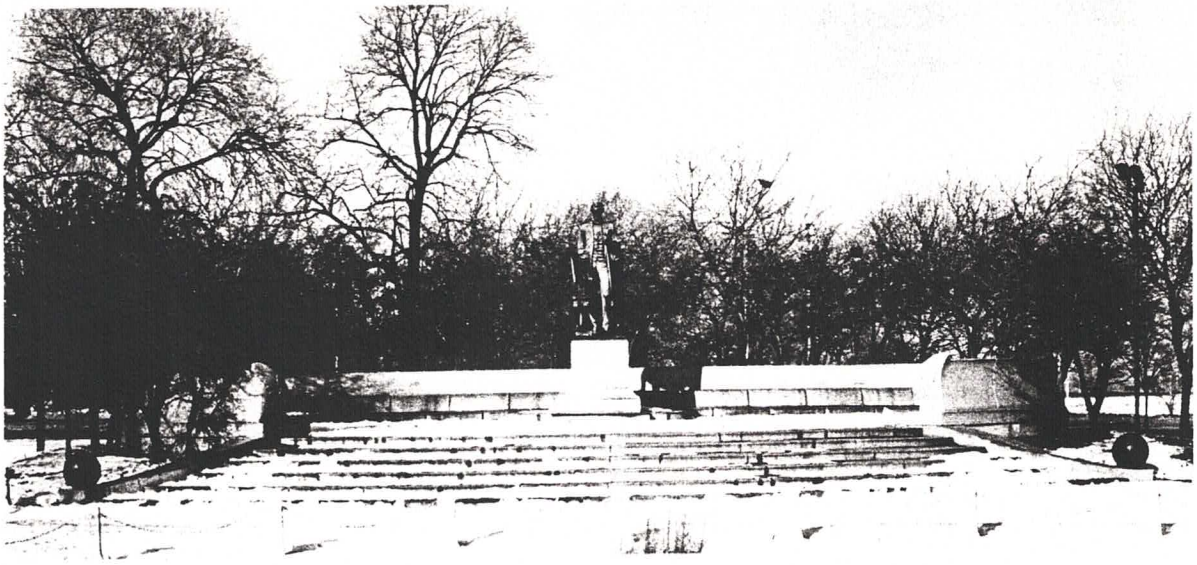
BUILT: 1887
SCULPTOR: AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS
ARCHITECT: STANFORD WHITE

Chicago has many monuments to its past, but few are as significant for both artistry and subject as the Abraham Lincoln Monument in Lincoln Park. It is one of the oldest public sculptures in Chicago and one of the most significant monuments to Lincoln in the United States. As the first public monument in Chicago to the president who led the nation through the Civil War, it exemplifies the late nineteenth-century American desire to commemorate the heroes of that conflict through public sculptures.

The monument is considered to be the most significant and influential nineteenth-century sculpture of Lincoln. Its combination of naturalistic appearance, sharp portrayal of personality, and Classical idealization was innovative and influenced a generation of American sculptors. It has since become one of America's iconic images of Lincoln.

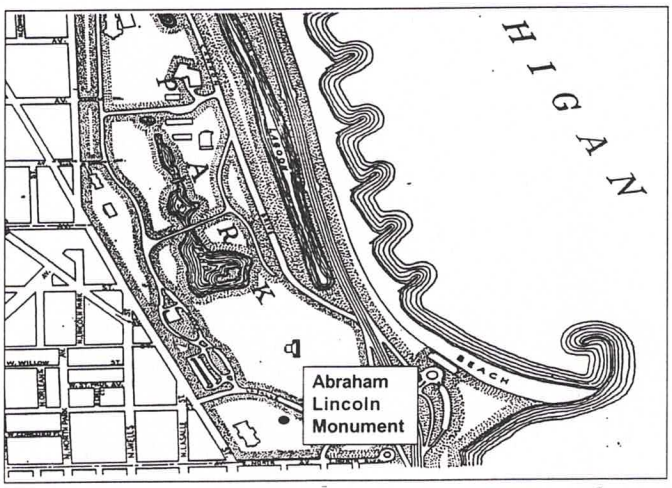
The Abraham Lincoln Monument is the work of two distinguished designers—sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and architect Stanford White—and is an outstanding example of their collaboration. Saint-Gaudens is considered one of the finest sculptors in American history and a master of portraiture. White was a partner in the influential architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White and designed many important buildings in the Classical Revival style. It is popularly known as the "Standing Lincoln" to distinguish it from a later monument to Lincoln, also by Saint-Gaudens and White, located in Grant Park.

The Abraham Lincoln Monument has been an established visual feature of Lincoln Park since its completion in 1887. Its location—at the head of North Dearborn Parkway—has made it a visual "gateway" into the park for generations of Chicagoans.



Above and left: The Abraham Lincoln Monument consists of a larger-than-life statue of Lincoln set within an oval Classical-style "exedra," or high-backed bench.

Below: The monument is located in the southwest corner of Lincoln Park.



MONUMENT HISTORY

In 1881 Eli Bates, a pioneer Chicago lumberman, left $40,000 in his will to pay for a statue of Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, to be placed in Lincoln Park. Through this bequest, Bates was typical of many Chicagoans during the late nineteenth century in his desire to both beautify the city and to immortalize a great American hero. It was a period when Americans increasingly commemorated "the heroes of war, giants in the political arena, or some popular historic event," in the words of Chicago historian Bessie Louise Pierce.

The commission for the monument was given to a New York sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The young sculptor had recently achieved great acclaim for his monument to Civil War Admiral David Farragut, located in New York's Madison Square, and his ability to create sculptural figures that evoked idealized personality traits seemed suited to the project.

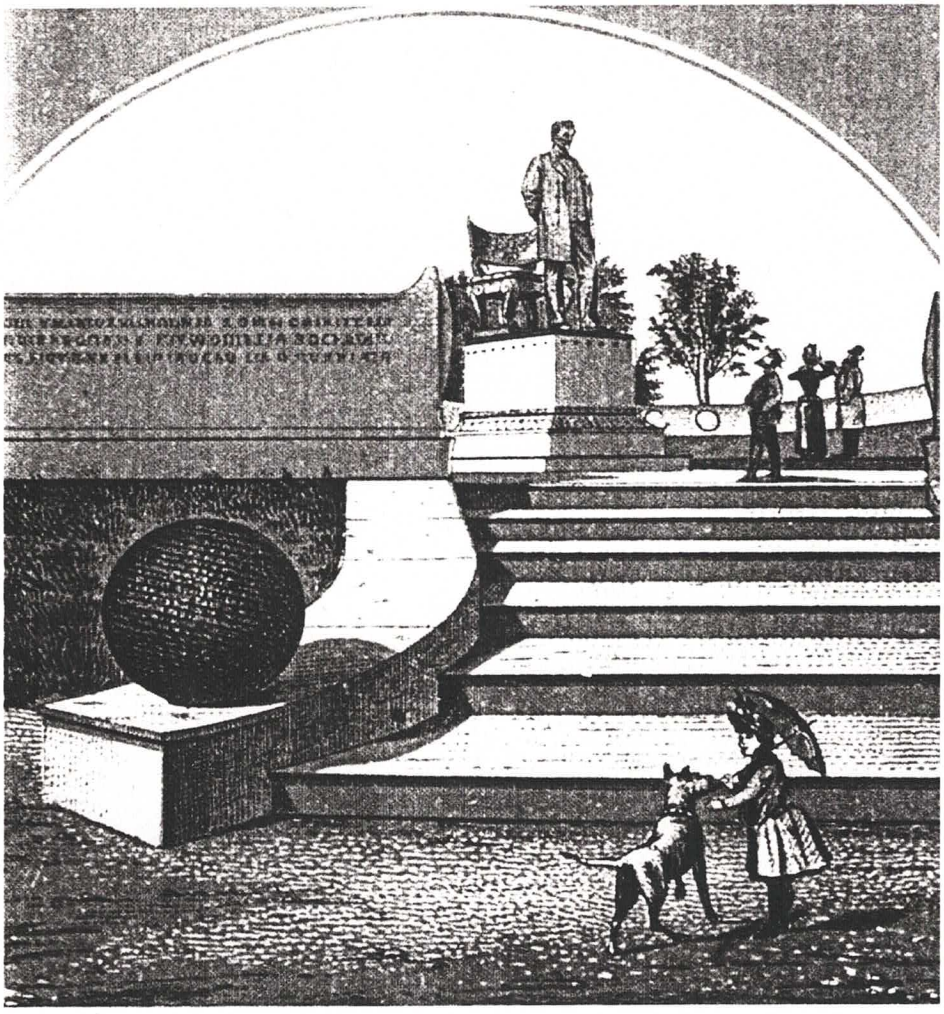
Saint-Gaudens worked on the statue for several years in his Cornish, New Hampshire, studio. A local New Hampshire man, Langdon Morse, who was similar in height to Lincoln, was the model for the statue's body. The face and hands were modeled after a life mask and hands, sculpted by Chicago artist Leonard Volk in 1860, for which Lincoln posed. Saint-Gaudens also relied on photographs and his own boyhood memories of Lincoln campaigning in New York.

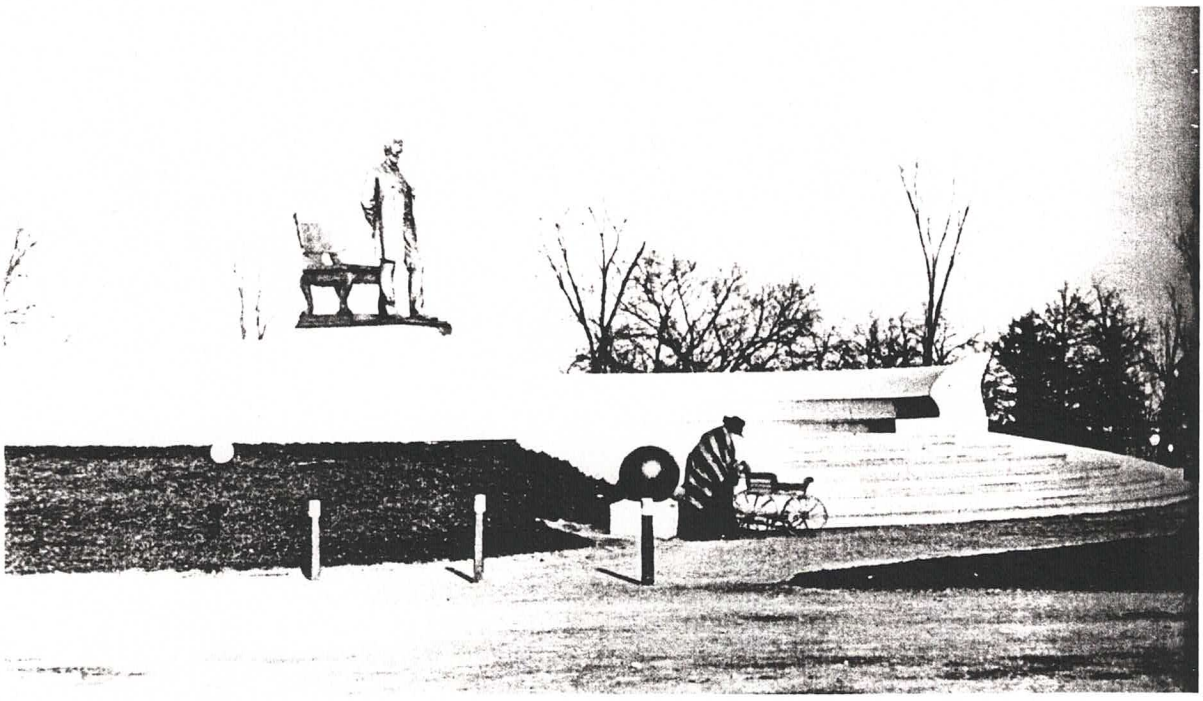
Saint-Gaudens was aided by architect Stanford White, a partner in the New York firm of McKim, Mead, and White. White was a close personal friend and had collaborated with Saint-Gaudens on the Farragut statue, designing the base. The division of labor was similar with the Lincoln monument: Saint-Gaudens designed the statue of Lincoln himself, while White created the statue's pedestal and architectural setting, an oval Classical-style "exedra," or high-backed bench.

The Abraham Lincoln Monument was unveiled on October 22, 1887, on a rainy afternoon that attracted between 6,000 and 10,000 spectators according to newspaper accounts. Speeches were given by Chicago Mayor E. A. Roche and Lincoln friend and advisor Leonard Swett. Lincoln's grandson and namesake, Abraham Lincoln II, unveiled the statue, while his father, Robert Todd Lincoln, stood by silently.

MONUMENT DESCRIPTION

The Abraham Lincoln Monument is located at the southern end of Lincoln Park, Chicago's north-side lakefront park. It is sited on axis with North Dearborn Parkway, one of the city's most prestigious residential streets when the statue was unveiled in 1887 and the historic southern entrance to the park. Originally, Dearborn extended into the park to the monument itself, then split into branching park lanes on either side of the monument. (Dearborn now ends at North Avenue—the southern boundary of Lincoln





Two historic views of the Abraham Lincoln Monument soon after its unveiling in 1887.

Commonly known as the "Standing Lincoln," the Abraham Lincoln Monument combines a realistic depiction of the sixteenth president of the United States with a Classical-style setting.

Park—and a "channel garden" of perennial flowers extends from North to the monument.) The statue's placement at the end of Dearborn was a small gesture of formal, Beaux-Arts city planning for the city, notorious in the nineteenth century for its relatively unplanned growth into the countryside surrounding the historic town center at the mouth of the Chicago River.

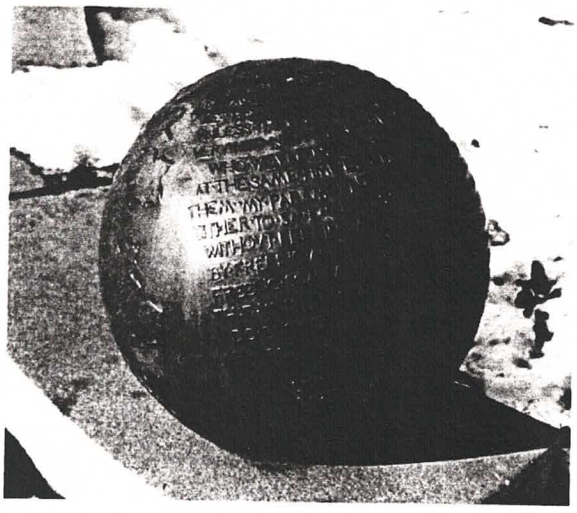
The monument consists of two major components—the statue itself and its architectural setting. Saint-Gaudens created a full-length statue of Lincoln, larger than life at 11-1/2 feet high. The president is standing atop a gray granite pedestal, seven feet in height, decorated with stars and inscribed "Gift of Eli Bates / Abraham Lincoln." Behind him is a Classical-style chair ornamented with an eagle with wings spread, said to resemble an ancient Greek chair the sculptor once saw on a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. This elaborate "Chair of State" is meant to represent the Presidency. Lincoln himself, however, is depicted quite naturally, wearing contemporary dress rather than the Classical toga more common to nineteenth-century sculptures of heroes and statesmen. With bowed head, one hand on his lapel, and one foot forward, the president is depicted as having just stood and, lost in momentary thought, preparing to give a speech.

The architectural setting, designed by White, is formal and Classical in style, creating an "outdoor room" within which to view Saint-Gaudens' statue. It consists of an encircling Classical-style "exedra," or high-backed bench, open to the south and set atop a stone foundation several steps above the surrounding park. Based on ancient Greek meeting places, the oval exedra, 60 feet wide and 30 feet deep, has large stylized eagle wings carved into each end. Selections from Lincoln's speeches, including one given at New York's Cooper Union in 1860, are carved on the outside wall of the exedra. Twin bronze globes, also bearing quotes from Lincoln's speeches, flank the exedra's steps. Bushes and small trees visually shelter the rear of the monument from busy LaSalle Drive to the north.

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS AND STANFORD WHITE

Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) is considered one of America's greatest sculptors. Born in Dublin, Ireland, to a French-born father and Irish mother, Saint-Gaudens came to the United States with his family while an infant. While a teenager, he was apprenticed to two New York stone carvers, then went to Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, then the premier art school in the world. Upon returning to the United States in 1872, the young sculptor soon developed a reputation for his life-like, naturalistic portraits, imparting both a sense of realism and strong personality to his images. Wayne Craven, in his 1968 survey of American sculpture, stated that Saint-Gaudens "brought to American sculpture a new vitality in its naturalism, a new spirit of heroics in the images of its leaders, and an elevated standard of professional workmanship."

Saint-Gaudens designed approximately three dozen important public monuments, plus scores of private portrait busts and medallions. Among these were the Robert Gould



Left: Saint-Gaudens depicted Lincoln deep in thought, preparing to speak to a waiting crowd.

Top: Bronze spheres bear excerpts from Lincoln's speeches.

Bottom: The surrounding granite exedra is detailed with eagle's wings.

Shaw Memorial in Boston, Massachusetts, completed in 1897, and the William Tecumseh Sherman Monument in New York's Central Park, erected in 1903. He also designed the "Storks at Play" fountain, with the aid of assistant Frederick MacMonnies. (Also commissioned by Eli Bates' estate, the fountain is located in Chicago's Lincoln Park near the Conservatory.)

Many of Saint-Gaudens' most acclaimed public monuments, including Chicago's "Standing Lincoln," were collaborations with architect Stanford White (1853-1906). White was one of the most prominent architects in America. As a partner in the firm of McKim, Mead, and White, he was the designer of fashionable houses and clubs for New York's elite. Among his most prominent commissions were the Shingle-style William Low House in Bristol, Rhode Island (1885-87), Madison Square Garden in New York City (1887-91), the Washington Memorial Arch at the foot of New York's Fifth Avenue (1889-92), and the Bronx campus of New York University (1892-1901). In Chicago, White is credited with the design of the McCormick-Patterson House, located on the Near North Side at Astor and Burton Streets (located within the Astor Street Chicago Landmark District).

Besides the "Standing Lincoln," Saint-Gaudens and White together designed over a half-dozen significant monuments. Their works are considered among the finest examples of artist-architect collaboration in the history of the United States. The earliest was the Farragut Monument in New York's Madison Square (1879-80). Another that received great acclaim was the Adams Monument in Washington, D.C., commissioned by novelist Henry Adams in 1890 as a memorial to his wife. In Chicago, other collaborative designs by Saint-Gaudens and White include the General John A. Logan Monument, placed in Grant Park in 1897, and a second monument to Abraham Lincoln, commonly known as the "Seated Lincoln," also located in Grant Park, but not erected until 1926, almost 20 years after the death of Saint-Gaudens.

LATER HISTORY

The Abraham Lincoln Monument was acclaimed as a masterpiece from the day of its unveiling. The *Chicago Tribune* hailed the statue as "a splendid triumph" and noted that Lincoln now "stands forever, his rugged, deeply seamed countenance stooping, as it were, a little over the people, as his mind must have stooped upon them all, North and South, with pity, attention, and compassion."

Observers noted that Saint-Gaudens had captured both a natural likeness of the man while conveying his innate seriousness and dignity. The Chicago *Inter-Ocean* noted that the statue showed Lincoln's rugged honesty, sympathetic heart, and great soul." Critic M. G. Van Rensselaer, writing for *Century Magazine* in November 1887, said:

> *The Lincoln monument for Chicago is the most important commemorative work that Mr. St. Gaudens has yet produced and may well remain the most*

important of his life. . . . The dignity of the man and his simplicity; his strength, his inflexibility and his tenderness; his goodness and his courage; his intellectual confidence and his humility of soul; the poetic cast of his thought, the homely vigor of his manner, and the underlying sadness of his spirit,—all these may be read in the wonderfully real yet ideal portrait which the sculptor has created. . . . In the architectural portion of his work Mr. St. Gaudens was assisted by Mr. Stanford White, and together they have given us a monument which is the most precious the country yet possesses; which is not only our best likeness of Abraham Lincoln, but our finest work of monumental art.

Similar opinions have been expressed in the years since. Readers of the *Chicago Record-Herald* in 1913 voted the monument "the greatest work of sculpture in America." In 1917 the national periodical *Art World* called the sculpture "unquestionably the noblest statue so far erected of our great President; among the half-dozen greatest portrait statues created in the nineteenth century." Chicago artist Lorado Taft, in his pioneering history of American sculpture published in 1921, said of the statue, "One stands before it and feels himself in the very presence of America's greatest soul." Chicago poet Carl Sandburg mentions the statue in his *Chicago Poems* of 1916:

I cross Lincoln Park on a winter night when the snow is falling.
Lincoln in bronze stands among the white lines of snow, his bronze forehead meeting soft echoes of the newsies crying forty thousand men are dead along the Yser, his bronze ears listening to the mumbled roar of the city at his bronze feet.

Today, the "Standing Lincoln" is considered one of the definitive images of the man, along with Daniel Chester French's more idealized sculpture for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., finished in 1922, and Gutzon Borglum's monumental face for Mount Rushmore, completed in 1937. Ira Bach and Mary Lackritz Gray state in *Chicago's Famous Sculptures* that the sculpture has been acclaimed "not only as the best likeness of Lincoln but also as one of the finest works of monumental art in the U.S." Bach notes that the statue "is rendered with a great simplicity that conveys the dignity of the man while hinting at the tragedy of his death and with such naturalness that the viewer is convinced that Lincoln rose from the large, low chair behind him only a moment ago."

The "Standing Lincoln" has been a popular image for reproduction during its 114-year history. Full-scale replicas of Saint-Gaudens' statue were given to England and Mexico as gifts of the American government in 1920 and 1966 respectively. Small-scale versions are owned by the Carnegie Institute Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Newark Museum, and art museums at Harvard and Yale.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the

Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Abraham Lincoln Monument (commonly known as the "Standing Lincoln") be designated as a Chicago Landmark

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

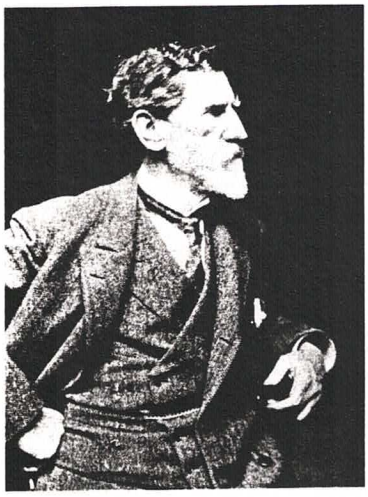
Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

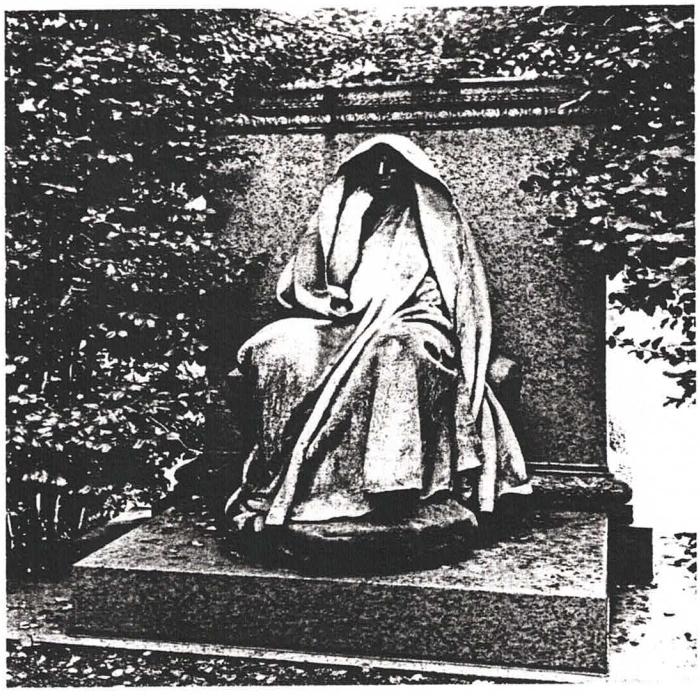
- The Abraham Lincoln Monument is one of the oldest and most important public sculptures in Chicago.
- The monument is considered the most significant and influential nineteenth-century sculpture of President Abraham Lincoln. Its combination of naturalistic appearance, sharp portrayal of personality, and Classical detail was innovative and influenced a generation of American sculptors. It has since become one of America's iconic images of the leader who led the nation through the Civil War.
- It exemplifies the nineteenth-century interest in the public commemoration of American heroes—in this case, Lincoln—and the encouragement of civic unity through shared symbols of patriotism.

Criterion 5: Important Architect

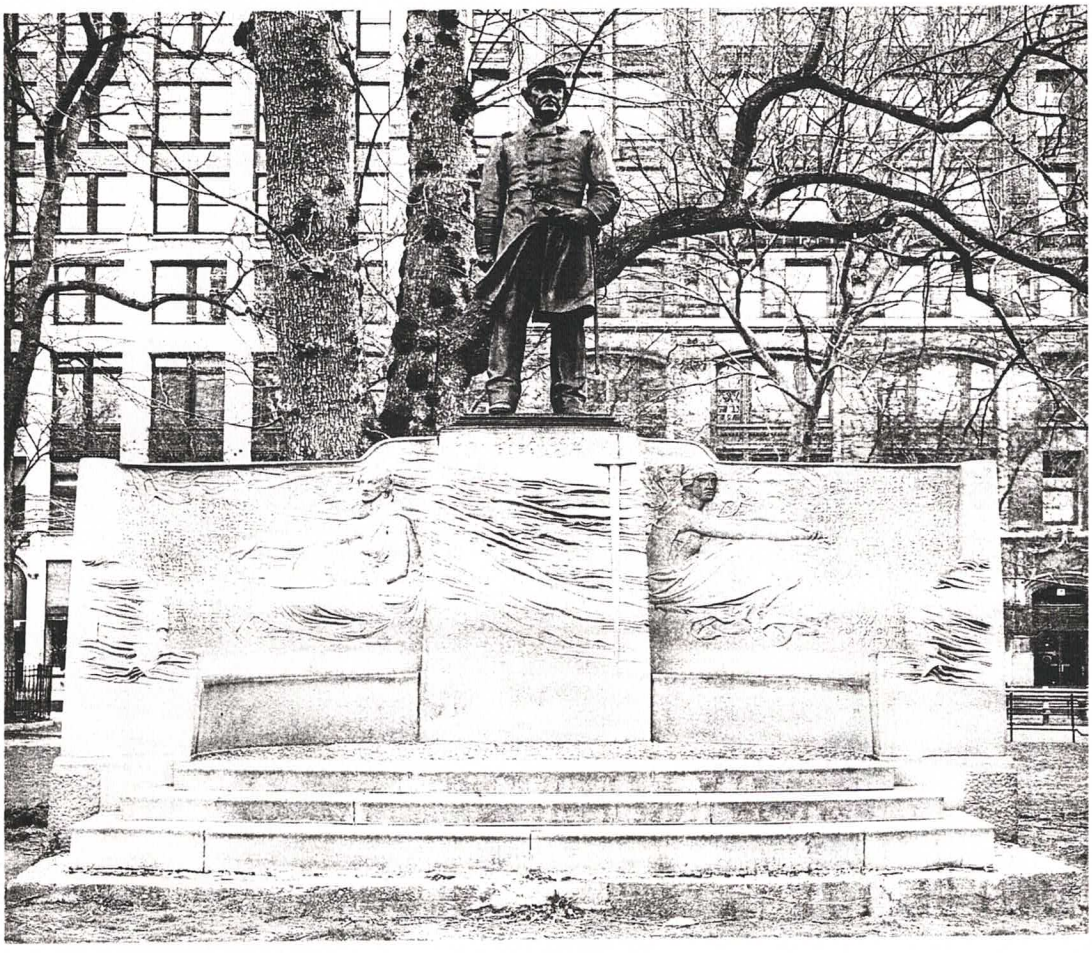
Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The monument displays the talents of two nationally important American designers, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and architect Stanford White, and is widely considered their best collaborative work in Chicago. Their monuments have been widely praised as among the best collaborative efforts of an artist and architect in nineteenth-century America and represent the late nineteenth-century flowering of artistic endeavor in the United States known as the "American Renaissance."
- The bronze statue of Lincoln himself is the work of Saint-Gaudens, one of America's most celebrated sculptors who was widely praised for his ability to combine visual depiction of personality with monumental grandeur.
- The architectural setting—a Classical-style "exedra" of granite—is the work of architect Stanford White, one of the most important late nineteenth-century architects and a partner in the noted New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White.





The Abraham Lincoln Monument was the collaborative work of artist Augustus Saint-Gaudens (above left) and architect Stanford White (left). Two other celebrated monuments by Saint-Gaudens and White are the Adams Monument (above right) in Washington D.C. and the Farragut Monument (bottom) in New York.



Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- The Abraham Lincoln Monument has been an established visual feature of Lincoln Park since its completion in 1887. Its location—at the head of Dearborn Parkway—has made it a visual "gateway" into the park for generations of Chicagoans.

Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The Abraham Lincoln Monument has excellent integrity, retaining those physical features most closely associated with its historic appearance and that convey its historic visual character. It retains its granite "exedra," consisting of a circular base and semi-circular, high-backed bench, and the bronze statue of Lincoln itself, with its accompanying Classical-style bronze chair.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its preliminary evaluation of the Abraham Lincoln Monument, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- the monument in its entirety, including the bronze statue of Lincoln with accompanying chair, the granite statue base, the encircling granite "exedra," and the monument's base and steps.

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From *Atlas of Chicago*: p. 2 (bottom).
From *Chicago Rising from the Prairie*: p. 4 (top).
From *Constructing Chicago*: p. 4 (bottom).
From *Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Master Sculptor*: p. 11 (top left, top right, and bottom).
From *McKim, Mead & White, Architects*: p. 11 (middle).

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 33 N. LaSalle St., Room 1600, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax; web site, http://www.ci.chi.il.us/landmarks

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the Commission's final recommendation to City Council should be regarded as final.